

Q4i MODEL

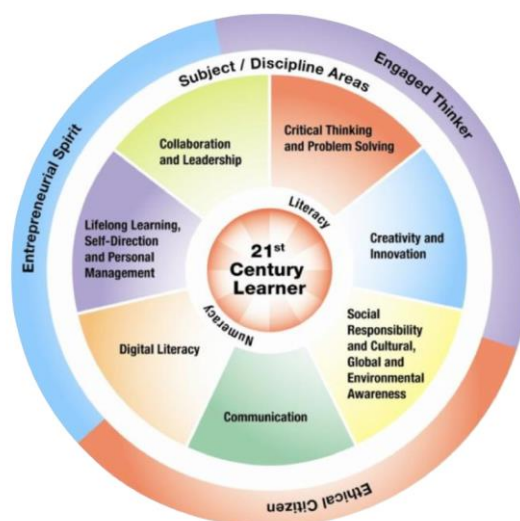
Quality for Innovation in European Schools

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1. INTRODUCTION

The world we live in is constantly changing. Our economies, the way we search for information, the way we communicate. The information technologies we are exposed to are proliferating rapidly. Digital technology is universal and virtually unstoppable. In education, it is our primary concern to cultivate the skills and abilities that will allow our children to live successfully in this 21st century world. It is our duty to define new approaches and strategies to prepare youth for future challenges, encouraging their autonomy and critical thinking skills, but also fostering creativity and imagination, as forces of individual growth and social innovation. Schools must adapt and innovate so they can support the acquisition of these 21st century skills.



To meet the needs in this globalization era, students have to acquire 21st century skills. By having 21st century skills they can be effective learners, collaborators, communicators, and creators. Students who have these 21st century skills are more prepared to align with the shift in how people learn, how people get jobs and how economies are constantly changing. School leaders and teachers should be trained to integrate 21st century skills into core academic subjects.

In today's schooling environment, supporting sustainable and innovative schools requires understanding the short and long term factors that affect the school and the education context. Pursuit of high quality education requires a strong future orientation and a willingness to make long-term commitments to students and key stakeholders - community, parents, employers, teachers and staff, partners, and the public.

2. The Q4I project

The Q4I project, which started in December 2012, aims to develop, test and mainstream a quality development approach for schools that includes a strong commitment to innovation and that is based on the participation of all key stakeholders: students, teachers and parents, employers and representatives of local community. Q4I is a project designed to ensure high quality education while innovating educational practices. Using the innovative Q4I processes will lead to higher quality standards and the ability to adapt to constant changes.

The Q4I Model is based on "4 engines of change", that should be embedded in schools development plans:

1. **Key competences for lifelong learning** should become a pillar of school education achievements, and in particular the learning to learn competence should be a main focus of efforts. This first engine is useful to set the basic learning outcomes that will give pupils tools to become active learners and have an active citizenship. The lifelong learning competencies are then involved in the development of other skills that, in turn, reinforce basic competencies.
2. **The use of ICT to support learning processes** and to integrate the informal learning of digital natives should become an integral part of school education, considering the specific value of ICT in supporting the acquisition of key competences and learning/working processes. ICT can play a fundamental role on innovation, allowing a direct flow of information to the school head, teachers and administrative staff about the pertinence of used methods. On the other hand, ICT enormously increase transparencies of processes thus giving its contribution to raise the level of quality.
3. **Creativity and innovation attitudes and skills.** Creativity should be understood as a factor interacting in all areas, required for our personal fulfilment, fundamental in making innovation possible in each area, and essential for a social dimension that allows inter-cultural positive interactions.
4. **Inter-cultural learning skills** Schools have a role to play in the development of an intercultural society equipping pupils with intercultural skills essentials to appreciate the richness of diversity of culture but also to raise their awareness of their own culture. Who is only familiar with his own culture does not really know it.

3. The Q4i model for school innovation

The Q4i model is based on six **Areas of change** and four **Engines of Change**.

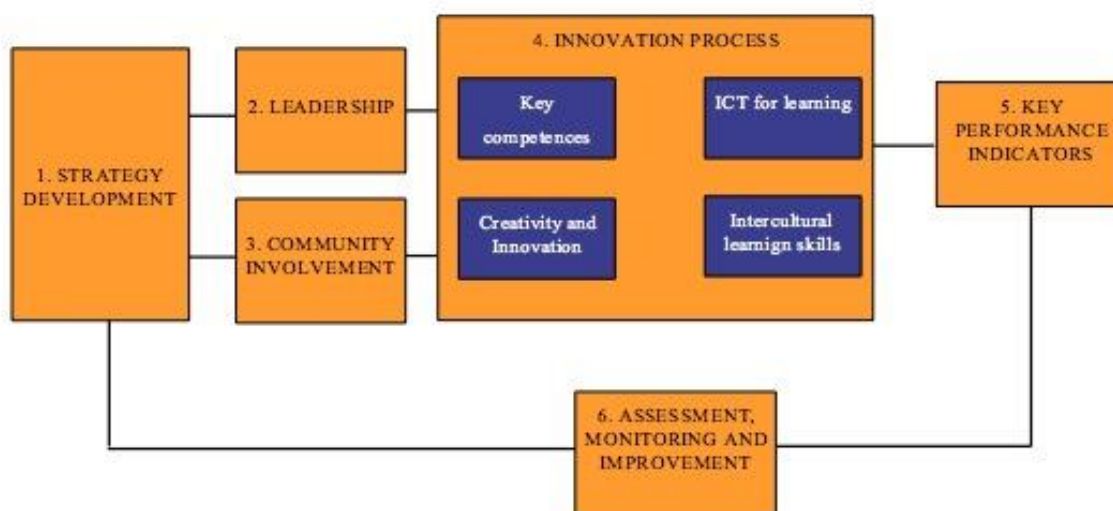
The Q4i **Focus Areas** (corresponding to the macro criteria in the „EFQM quality terminology“) these are are:

1. Strategy Development
2. Leadership
3. Community involvement
4. Innovation Process
5. Key Performance Indicators
6. Assessment, Monitoring and Improvement

The Q4i **Engines of change** are:

1. Key competences for lifelong learning.
2. The use of ICT to support learning processes.
3. Creativity and innovation attitudes and skills.
4. Inter-cultural learning skills

Areas and engines of change are interconnected within the model. The core of the model is the Innovation Process (where the four engines are placed), enabled by Strategy Development through Leadership and Community Involvement, measured by Key Performance Indicators and monitored by Assessment, Monitoring and Improvement.



The Q4I Model is based on a non-prescriptive spirit with a high degree of adaptability, for the following reasons:

- ★ The focus is on results, not on procedures and tools.
- ★ Organizations are encouraged to develop and demonstrate creative, adaptive, and flexible approaches for meeting improvement and innovation objectives.
- ★ The support is intended to foster incremental and major (“breakthrough”) improvements, as well as basic change through innovation.
- ★ The selection of tools and techniques depends on the school organization type and size, organizational relationships, organization’s stage of development, teachers and staff capabilities and responsibilities.
- ★ A focus on common criteria, rather than on common procedures, fosters understanding, communication, sharing and integration, while supporting innovation and diversity in approaches.

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE Q4I AREAS OF CHANGE

1. Strategy Development

Strategy development refers to school's approach to preparing for the future. Strategy development might utilize various types of forecasts, projections, options, scenarios, or other approaches to envisioning the future for purposes of decision making and resource allocation. Strategy development should involve key partners, students, and stakeholders.

1.1 The School establishes its strategy and strategic objectives to guide and strengthen the performance of organization and students and their future success.

- ★ In defining Strategy, the School Leaders take into consideration School's weaknesses, strengths, opportunities, threats, as well as key capabilities;
- ★ The School ensures it has up-to-date information about technological innovations or other changes that might affect its educational programs and services;
- ★ The Strategy should respond and anticipate to changes in the world of work and the labour market more rapidly and flexibly.
- ★ Strategy development consist of the following steps: a) describe where you want to be in 4-5 years --> what is the ultimate goal, b) describe where you are right now, c) describe what steps need to be undertaken (incl. assessments and loops).

1.2 The School converts its strategic objectives into Action Plans, both on short- and long-term.

- ★ The Action Plans specify key performance requirements and indicators for such areas as teachers/staff development plans and the use of learning technologies.
- ★ The Action Plans are flexible, if circumstances require a shift in plans and rapid execution of new plans.
- ★ Action plans should include resources that are aligned with and support the School's overall strategy.

2. Leadership

The school's leaders should set directions and create a student-focused, learning-oriented climate; clear and visible values; and high expectations. School leaders should serve as role models through their ethical behaviour and their personal involvement in planning, communications, review of organizational performance, and teachers and staff recognition.

2.1 The School's leaders set directions, values, and expectations that balance the needs of all stakeholders. Leadership supports and motivates innovation, creativeness and competence development.

- ★ The leaders ensure the creation of strategies, systems, and methods for achieving high quality performance, stimulating innovation and building knowledge and capabilities.
- ★ Leaders create an environment for performance improvement, accomplishment of school's mission and strategic objectives.
- ★ Leaders encourage communication throughout the entire organization.
- ★ Leaders reinforce ethics, values, and expectations while building leadership, commitment, and initiative throughout the entire organization.

2.2 The School's Leaders ensure that the school is involved in change management

- ★ The leaders should foster a culture within which people are encouraged to try new ideas, feel motivated to make suggestions, have their successful innovations recognised and believe there will be a positive response to their good ideas.
- ★ The leaders encourage generation of new ways of thinking that foster innovation initiatives.
- ★ The leaders should involve stakeholders in finding necessary changes for the sustainable success of the school

3. Community involvement

Practicing good citizenship refers to leadership and support - within the limits of school's resources - of publicly important purposes. Such purposes might include improving education in the community, raising awareness on environmental concerns, practicing resource conservation, performing community service, and sharing quality-related information.

3.1 Schools should take initiatives to involve community representatives in finding new ways of improving the educational system.

- ★ Schools should stress ethical behaviour in all stakeholder interactions. Highly ethical conduct should be a requirement and should be monitored by the school's leaders.
- ★ By creating value for students and stakeholders, the school contributes to society and to improving overall education performance, and it builds loyalty.
- ★ The School should cooperate closer with universities and enterprises to help students in their career choice

3.2 The School should develop a learning culture and citizenship skills, built on the foundation of community spirit, motivated creativity and joy of learning.

- ★ Co-operation between home and school and other parties should be built towards educational partnerships.
- ★ The School maintains an active dialog with Labour Market representatives, in order to ensure the relevance of students' training.
- ★ School should encourage students to participate in volunteering activities where they learn to help other people and are encouraged to build up knowledge in a practical field.

4. Innovation Process

Innovation means making meaningful change to improve the school's programs, services, processes, and operations and to create new value for its stakeholders. Within Q4I, this is based on the four Engines of Change:

- I. **Key competences for lifelong learning** should become a pillar of school education achievements, and in particular the learning to learn competence should be a main focus of efforts. This first engine is useful to set the basic learning outcomes that will give pupils tools to become active learners and have an active citizenship. The lifelong learning competencies are then involved in the development of other skills that, in turn, reinforce basic competencies.
- II. **The use of ICT to support learning processes** and to integrate the informal learning of digital natives should become an integral part of school education, considering the specific value of ICT in supporting the acquisition of key competences and learning/working processes. ICT can play a fundamental role on innovation, allowing a direct flow of information to the school head, teachers and administrative staff about the pertinence of used methods. On the other hand, ICT enormously increase transparencies of processes thus giving its contribution to raise the level of quality.
- III. **Creativity and innovation attitudes and skills.** Creativity should be understood as a factor interacting in all areas, required for our personal fulfilment, fundamental in making innovation possible in each area, and essential for a social dimension that allows inter-cultural positive interactions.
- IV. **Inter-cultural learning skills** Schools have a role to play in the development of an intercultural society equipping pupils with intercultural skills essentials to appreciate the richness of diversity of culture but also to raise their awareness of their own culture. Who is only familiar with his own culture does not really know it.

5. Key performance Indicators

A major consideration in performance improvement and change management involves the selection and use of performance indicators.

5.1 A comprehensive set of indicators represents a clear basis for aligning all processes with the organization's goals.

- ★ The performance indicators should be tied to student, stakeholder, and organizational performance.
- ★ The use of a balanced composite of leading and lagging performance indicators should be used as an effective means to communicate short- and long-term priorities, monitor actual performance, and provide a clear basis for improving results.
- ★ Through the analysis of data from tracking processes, the indicators may be in their turn evaluated and changed to better support the school's goals.

5.2 The School's performance measurements need to focus on key results.

- ★ The School should identify the key results needed to evaluate the achievement of strategic goals.
- ★ The focus on results ensures maintaining superior value of services; superior organizational performance (operational, human resources, ethical, and financial); and organizational and personal learning.
- ★ Results should be used to create and balance value for students and for all stakeholders.

6. Assessment, Monitoring and Improvement

Improving processes to achieve better performance means providing better educational value for the student and better operational performance from the other stakeholders' perspectives.

6.1 Organizational performance reviews should be based on organizational performance measurement guided by the strategic objectives and action plans and should set priorities for improvement.

- ★ The School should develop an assessment approach that might include using information from students, families, feeder schools, receiving schools, employers, and governing bodies; using information from benchmarking practices; conducting peer evaluations; using research on learning and instructional methods; collecting information on the use of new learning technology; sharing successful strategies across organization to drive learning and innovation.
- ★ Besides the accumulation of information or measurement, the assessment should be used in order to make decision as to how to respond to that information.
- ★ Assessment findings could lead to new inputs, new requirements, and opportunities for innovation, used to revise initial Action plans.

6.2 The School's monitoring system should examine performance periodically and requires evidence of this at organisation, team and individual levels.

- ★ School leaders and teachers should use monitoring in order to refine school and classroom-based innovations, to measure the impact of new methods on learning, and to build the evidence base on "what works".
- ★ The school should examine its effectiveness and the changes that have occurred, so that it can build lessons from such experience into future plans.
- ★ Teachers working in innovative programmes will need extra support to understand where they may need to adjust practices.

6.3 Process improvement approaches should utilize relevant data to evaluate alternatives and set priorities.

- ★ Improvement of educational processes should imply a complete redesign of the content or delivery of programs, offerings, and services.
- ★ The usefulness of assessment data for improving instruction or shaping innovative classroom practices depends upon the following factors: a) Data need to be broken down to a useful level of detail and b) Data need to be provided in a timely manner.
- ★ Innovation should be integrated into daily work and should be supported by the School's performance improvement system.